

NRCS Welcomes Agricultural Leaders from Soviet Georgia and Azerbaijan

The World Affairs Council of Greater Fort Worth, with the support of the State Department and USDA in Washington, D.C., selected NRCS Texas to host a group of international agricultural delegates from Soviet Georgia and Azerbaijan. The meeting took place within Zone 5 at the Weatherford Service Center on December 16, 2004.

Zone 5 was represented by Assistant State Conservationist Al Leal, Weatherford District Conservationist Ronnie Herring, and Zone 5 Public Affairs Specialist Randy Henry, along with visiting senior members from Soviet Georgia's Plant Protection Agency and Plant Protective Service. Others in attendance were the senior specialist from the Department of Plants and Quarantine Protection and chief of veterinary medicine from the Ministry of Agriculture for Azerbaijan, as well as two Russian interpreters.

The international delegates were informed about several NRCS services for private landowners and producers, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and Conservation Security Program. All the delegates wanted to know about the farmers and how we serve them in Texas, along with our services and management practices.

"NRCS is here at the local level by the request of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, where we have voluntary services for private landowners and producers," said Al Leal. "From an international perspective, here in Texas we have very different agricultural customs from other countries such as Germany, Spain and Mexico. We setup conservation plans based on individual applications submitted by each farmer or rancher, and as public servants we try to establish successful conservation practices for them in our zone and throughout Texas."

Each international delegate received NRCS publications targeting watersheds, range management, soil primers, and developing partnerships with people for healthy lands.